



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 7:15 a.m. EDT (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Thursday - January 2, 2003

- ***In the West***, rain and snow showers continue across ***northern California*** and the ***Pacific Northwest***, but unfavorably dry conditions persist elsewhere in the region.
- ***On the Plains***, mild, dry weather continues to favor overwintering wheat. Despite a lack of snow cover and persistently dry conditions across winter wheat areas of the ***northern and central High Plains***, weather patterns associated with El Niño have not allowed for sustained periods of bitterly cold weather. Today's high temperatures are forecast to exceed 50 degrees F as far north as ***Montana***.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, a developing storm system is producing snow from the ***middle Mississippi Valley to the Great Lakes States***, but mild, dry weather continues across the ***upper Midwest***.
- ***In the South***, soaking rains fell across the region on December 30-31, maintaining soil saturation, further delaying fieldwork, and leaving some winter grains in standing water. Cool, mostly dry weather prevails today, although isolated showers are developing in the ***lower Mississippi Valley***.

Outlook: A slow-moving storm system will produce widespread rain and snow in the ***southern Corn Belt*** and ***interior South*** through Friday and across the ***Northeast*** into Saturday. Elsewhere, significant precipitation will be confined to the ***Northwest***. Cool weather will linger through early next week in the ***East***, but above-normal temperatures are expected across the remainder of the U.S. Temperatures will average as much as 20 degrees F above normal on the ***northern Plains***. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for January 7-11 calls for below-normal precipitation nearly nationwide. Wet conditions will be confined to ***coastal New England*** and areas from the ***Pacific Northwest to the northern Rockies***. Above-normal temperatures are expected across the ***western half of the U.S.***, while colder-than-normal weather will prevail in locations ***east of the Mississippi River and south of the Ohio River***.

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